QUARTER-STAFF:

A PRACTICAL MANUAL.

BY

THOMAS A. McCARTHY,

Author of "Calisthenic Drilling," etc. Sixteen Years an Instructor,
Late Sergeant Instructor 7th R.F. and 65th Regiments.

WITH TWENTY-THREE FIGURES OF POSITIONS.

LONDON:
SONNENSCHEIN & CO.,
PATERNOSTER ROW.
1883.

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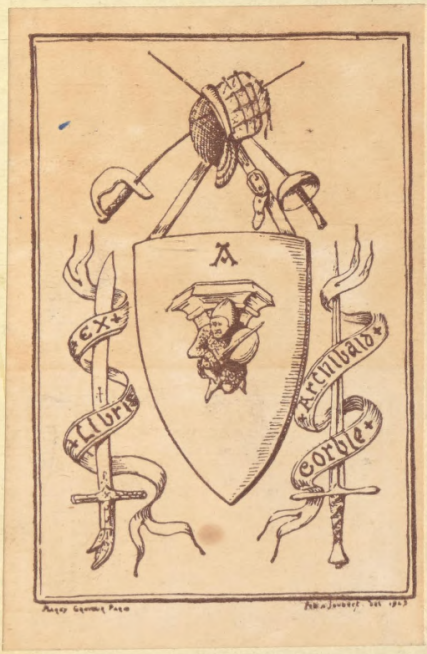
Bradfield



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PREFACE.

THE object of the author in compiling this little work is to fill an evident gap, there not being any special treatise in existence upon the once popular art of Quarter-staff. The Exercises have been carefully chosen from those that the author has himself used, during sixteen years' experience, some of which exercises are used by Amateurs and Instructors, both at drill and in public performances.

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INTRODUCTION.

QUARTER-STAFF, having become almost obsolete, I should like to see it revived if only for the good derived from this best of exercises. It is very easily learned, and for those who do not care about Boxing it is an excellent substitute, owing to the freedom of action afforded by "walking round," advancing and retiring, jumping, etc. I need hardly name the merits of Fencing and Sticks; yet in Quarter-staff there is even more liberty of action. Juniors can play with a six-foot staff without injury, if dressed;

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and after a time it will do away with a very great amount of timidity found in boys.

As already stated, it may be used as an exercise by those who object to *Boxing*, and it will be found an easy and invigorating game, and without danger.

THOS. A. McCARTHY.

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THE QUARTER-STAFF.

The Staff should be about 8 feet in length, and 4 or 5 inches in circumference (*Ash or Bamboo*). It may be 9 feet 6 inches long; but this depends entirely upon the players. I think this latter length too great, as ease and skilful manipulation are difficult with it.

THE DRESS.

The necessary Dress consists of Helmet, Jacket, Leg-guards, right and left-handed Gauntlets, and a pair of Padded Gloves.* Boxing-gloves may be used, but they afford no protection to the wrist.

This is the same Dress as for Sticks and Broad-sword, with the addition of a

* Mr. George Spencer's new patterns are the best.

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left-hand glove; all these articles are desirable: no one should play loose, without being thus dressed.

THE READY.

Each one stands facing inwards (*i.e.*, facing each other), about 4 feet apart, with the Staff in the right hand, held between the forefinger and thumb, the elbow slightly bent, the upper part in the hollow of the shoulder, the point on the ground, and in a line with the toe of the right foot.

PROVE DISTANCE.

After being numbered No. 1 and No. 2, make a half-turn to the right on both heels; then raise the Staff from the ground with the right hand grasping it. At the same time straighten the left arm to the front of the body, till the upper end of each Staff touches the centre of

the chest, the back of the right hand in a line with, and as high as, the shoulder, the even number moving backwards or forwards to the required distance, as in fig. A.

LOWER STAFFS.

The Staff will then be brought to the side, as already described, the body being at the half-turn.

ENGAGE.

Advance the left foot about 18 inches straight to the front, bending the left knee till it projects over the centre of the instep, the right knee being bent and pressed well back, the body perpendicular with the span. At the same time bring the Staff across the body, and seize it with the left hand about 2 feet 8 inches from the right, the back of the hand to the front, and as high as the top of the

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left shoulder, and half bent, while the right elbow touches the hollow of the side fore-arm nearly at right angles with the body, the back of the hand upwards.

When at the **ENGAGE**, both hands should be 2 feet 8 inches apart, and the same distance from each end as in fig. B.

Each limb should be mobile and free.

THE CHANGE.

Bring the advanced foot back, turning half-left, and advance the right foot to the front, at the same time giving the Staff a smart *cant* with the left hand, from left to right, changing hands, and grasp the Staff with the right hand above, and left below, as in fig. c.

ATTACKS AND DEFENCES.

ATTACK ONE. Strike with the upper end of the Staff at the right side

of the head (if the left foot is in front), stepping out about 18 inches, and raising the lower hand as high as the upper one, *i.e.*, about the height of the chin.

The **GUARD** is formed by carrying the upper hand quickly to the right side till the Staff is perpendicular and just clear of the point of the shoulder, the blow being received on the upper part of the Staff, as in fig. 1.

ENGAGE: { *each will again resume the* } **ENGAGE.**

ATTACK TWO. Strike at the left side of the head with the lower end of the Staff, stepping out as in **ONE**, and allow the upper hand to loosen its grasp, and the Staff to be above the left shoulder, both arms straight to the front.

The **GUARD** is formed by the blow being received on the centre (between the hands) of the Staff, by smartly raising

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the lower hand as high as, and opposite to, the left eye, lowering the upper hand a few inches, as in fig. 2.

ENGAGE: (*as already described.*)

ATTACK THREE. Strike at the centre of the body with the upper end of the Staff, stepping out as in **ONE** and **TWO**, the hand as high as the centre of the body and straight.

The **GUARD** is formed with the centre of the Staff, by carrying the Staff as in **ONE** to the right side, as in fig. 3.

ENGAGE: (*as already described.*)

ATTACK FOUR. Strike at the centre of the body (left side) with the lower end of the Staff, stepping out as in **TWO.**

The **GUARD** is formed as in **TWO,**

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with the upper hand as high as, and clear of, the left shoulder, as in fig. 4.

ENGAGE: (*as already described.*)

ATTACK FIVE. Strike at the leg (right side) with the upper end, stepping out, the arms being straight and as high as the opponent's knee.

The **GUARD** is formed with the lower end, by quickly advancing both arms to the front till the Staff is a few inches in advance of the *knee*, both hands opposite the centre of the body, and the Staff perpendicular, as in fig. 5.

ENGAGE: (*as already described.*)

ATTACK SIX. Strike with the lower end of the Staff at the left side of the leg, stepping out as in **TWO** and **FOUR.**

The **GUARD** is formed with the

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upper end of the Staff, by dropping the upper hand and raising the lower one to, and opposite to the point of the left shoulder (advancing both arms till a few inches clear of the knee, the Staff being perpendicular), as in fig. 4, observing the above rule.

ENGAGE: (*as already described.*)

The above **GUARD** can be formed with the lower end (without reversing it) by advancing both arms, as in **FIVE**, and bringing the lower end round the point of the *knee*; but it is rather awkward, as in the movement the Staff is likely to hit the leg or foot, and be too late to be effective (fig. 6).

ATTACK SEVEN (HEAD). Strike with the upper end of the Staff straight to the front at the middle of the head, stepping out at the time. This is the *pin*.

The **GUARD** is formed by bringing

the Staff horizontal, and a few inches above and in front of the head, the centre of the Staff receiving the blow with both hands above the shoulders, as in fig. 7.

ENGAGE: (*as already described.*)

The above represent all the **ATTACKS**, and each one should practise and perform them well before beginning **LOOSE PLAY.** There are several **FEINTS** which can be easily practised in conjunction with the **ATTACKS**; but *each player*, both No. 1, No. 2, should do the seven attacks well, both with right and with left foot in front, before commencing **LOOSE PLAY.**

FEINTS.

FEINT ONE. Make an attempt to strike the right side, moving the foot about 9 inches to the front. As soon as

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the **GUARD** is shown, complete the attack by **STRIKE TWO** on the left side, completing the step forward. The second **GUARD** being made, if successfully, recover immediately.

All feints must be done quickly, especially **GUARDING FEINTS.**

FEINT TWO and **STRIKE THREE.** Make an attempt of **STRIKE TWO**; on the **GUARD** being shown, make **STRIKE THREE** in the same manner as **FEINT ONE** and **STRIKE TWO.**

FEINT SIX, and **STRIKE AT HEAD**: (*as above described.*)

STEPPING OUT OF REACH.

After the **FEINTS STEPPING OUT OF REACH** will follow; but I must add another word or two on **FEINTS.**

All feints must be practised *loosely*

before this exercise is done. **LOOSE PLAY** with the Quarter-staff is exactly like loose Boxing, so far as movement is concerned, the greatest liberty being allowed in moving about, walking round, going backwards or forwards at the will of the players, attempt being made at the same time *to keep within hitting distance*, as it is very bad to be *too far apart*, since this looks very much like fear, the blows sometimes being a little heavier than with a Singlestick.

STEP BACK. Step smartly backwards out of reach, on being attacked, and strike by allowing the upper hand to slip back to the lower one. If any of the blows are delivered, the lower hand must not be moved; this is *foul*. The above is called "**CATCHING HIM.**" If the blow is delivered at the leg, the head would be the best place to "catch him," and *vice versâ*.

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THE PIN.

Strike at the head, and on the blow being guarded, press hard and keep the Staff on the guard. On the least weakening of the guard, step back and strike as directed above. This is called "**PINNING HIM**," and can easily be done. There is only one way out of the **PIN**: as soon as "pinned," step back and make **STRIKE ONE** or **TWO**, which form also an opposing guard. *Vide* fig. 7.

JUMPING.

A HIT AND A MISS. (Fig. 8.)

On striking at the lower limbs, by jumping upwards the attacking Staff will pass under the feet. I do not advise this system, though I have often seen it done, I never could do it, and it looks very much like a made-up affair (for show). It is not uncommon in a public exhibition, where the best man does not necessarily win.

One must lose, and there is nothing dishonourable in it; therefore, let the *best* man win, and the loser *lose* honestly!

FIRST PRACTICE.

STRIKES AND GUARDS.

NUMBER ONE.	**NUMBER TWO.**
STRIKE ONE.	**GUARD ONE.**
GUARD HEAD (7).	**STRIKE AT HEAD (7).**
STRIKE THREE.	**GUARD THREE.**
STRIKE TWO.	**GUARD TWO.**
GUARD FOUR.	**STRIKE FOUR.**
STRIKE AT HEAD.	**GUARD HEAD.**
STRIKE FIVE.	**GUARD FIVE.**
GUARD HEAD.	**STRIKE AT HEAD.**
STRIKE SIX.	**GUARD SIX.**

Repeat the above, No. 2 commencing.

After practising the above, standing, it should be done moving round, advancing and retiring, moving the feet as quickly as possible in and out of distance. Arms and legs should have perfect freedom of action, and not be stiff or in any way cramped.

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SECOND PRACTICE.

FEINTS.

NUMBER ONE (odd).	NUMBER TWO (even).
FEINT ONE.	GUARDS ONE AND FOUR.
STRIKE FOUR.	
GUARD HEAD.	STRIKE AT HEAD.
STRIKE THREE.	GUARD THREE.
FEINT TWO.	GUARDS TWO AND FIVE.
STRIKE FIVE.	
GUARD THREE.	STRIKE THREE.
STRIKE AT HEAD.	GUARD HEAD.
FEINT FIVE.	GUARD FIVE AND HEAD.
STRIKE AT HEAD.	
GUARD SIX.	STRIKE SIX.
STRIKE FOUR.	GUARD FOUR.

Repeat; even numbers commencing.

After doing the above, standing, they should be done moving. Too much care cannot be taken with these exercises, always showing an opposing guard, whenever attacked. Never *trust to luck* in guarding; but always follow the opposing Staff, either in a **FEINT** or otherwise, as you cannot always recognise a **FEINT**,

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its *object* being, of course, to deceive. By following all opposite moves with the opposing guard, the chances are equal, as it will be plain that half a guard can be made much more quickly than a whole guard. Therefore, it takes a little more time for the half and whole attacks to be made than to form the corresponding guards, as the defender has less ground to go over than the player acting on the offensive. Therefore always show the opposing guard on every occasion; it baffles your opponent, and occasionally makes him believe that you are bent on attack.

Do not get hurried; make each attack, on which you have decided, *quickly*. Never change your mind half-way and try some other attack for which you are not prepared. Steadiness and determination are worth a world of theory and subtilty, and to possess them, try, and try hard.

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TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR CLASSES.

Junior boys might with advantage use a 6-ft. Quarter-staff, instead of engaging in fights every morning, and knocking one another's faces out of shape, to settle their "private quarrels." Quarter-staff is very "manly," and some very "hard knocks" are received on both sides, and it has, moreover, this advantage over Fighting, *all marks are out of sight.*

The same rules are to be observed for Seniors as with the long-staff, and each must be properly dressed as described above. (Fig. 9.)

Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Printers, London and Aylesbury.

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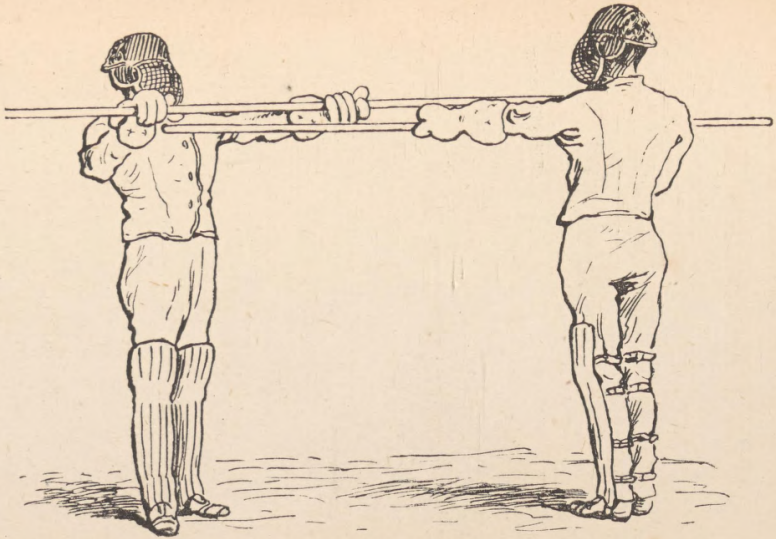
FIG. A



PROVING DISTANCE.

FIG. B.

FIRST POSITION (Left foot forward).

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FIG. C.

SECOND POSITION (Right foot forward).

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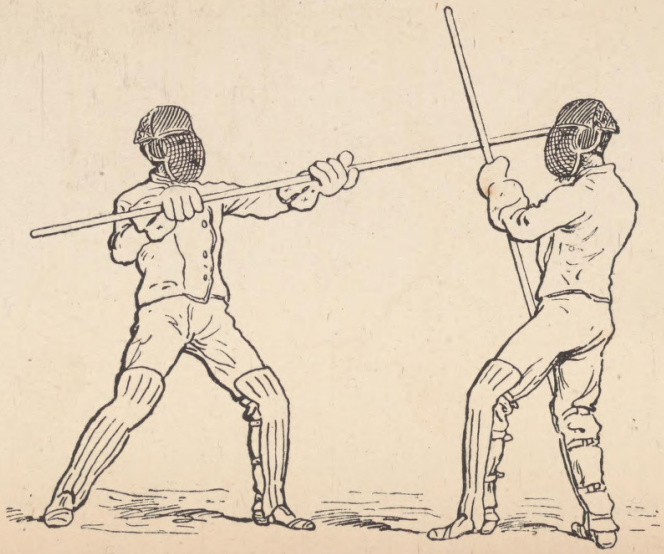
FIG. 1.

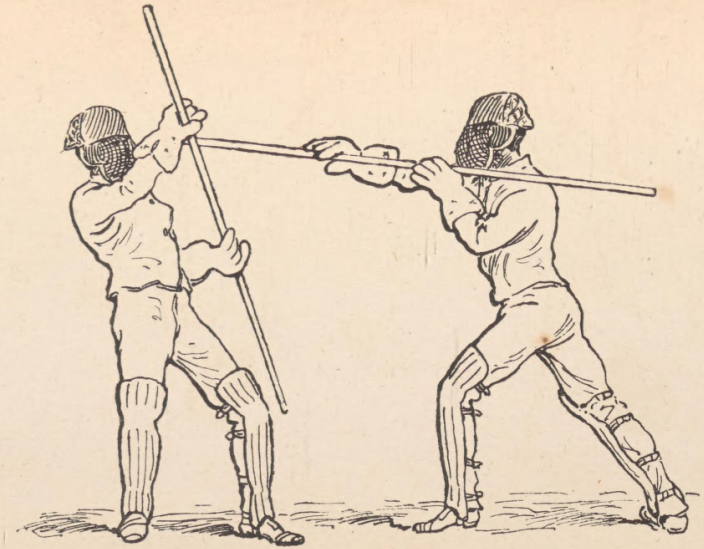


STRIKE ONE. FIRST GUARD.

FIG. 2.

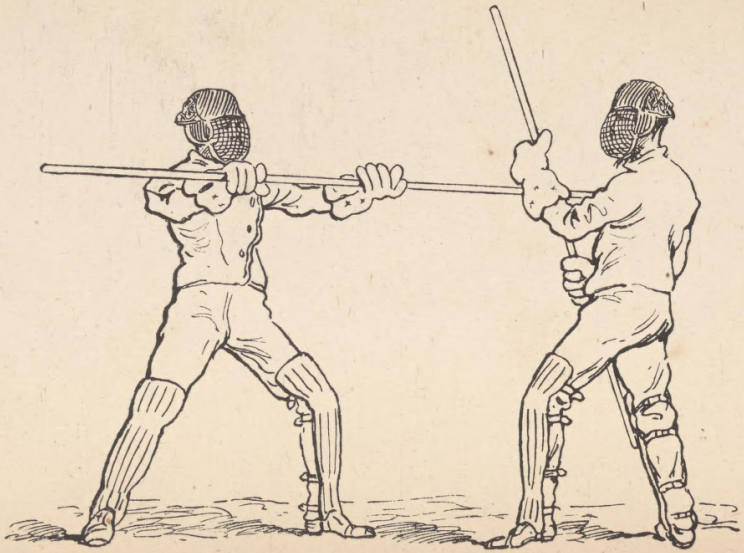
STRIKE ONE. FIRST GUARD.

FIG. 2.



SECOND GUARD. STRIKE TWO.

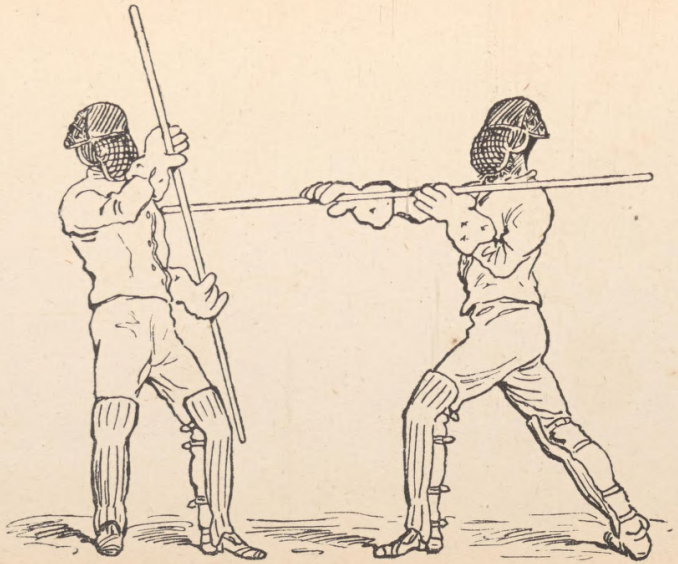
FIG. 3.



STRIKE THREE. THIRD GUARD.

STRIKE THREE. THIRD GUARD.

FIG. 4.



FOURTH GUARD. STRIKE FOUR.

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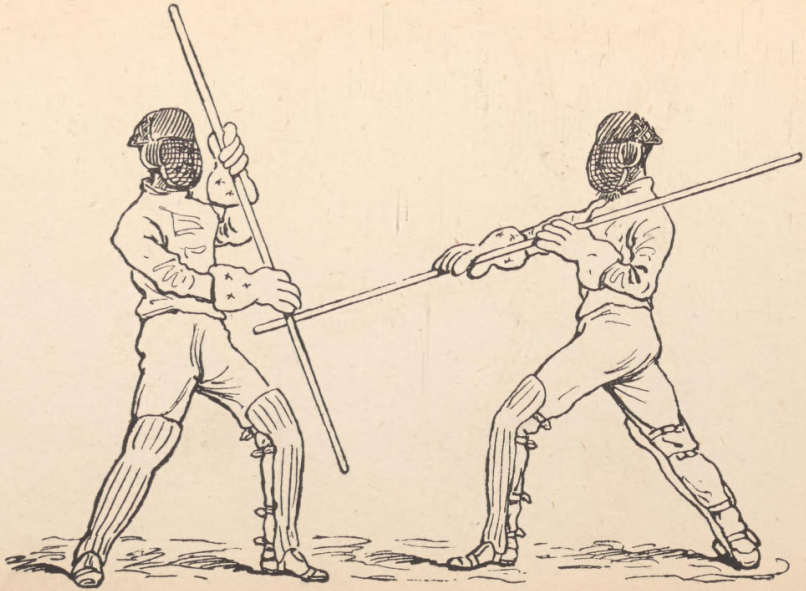
FIG. 5.

STRIKE FIVE. FIFTH GUARD.

FIG. 6.

STRIKE FIVE. FIFTH GUARD.

FIG. 6.



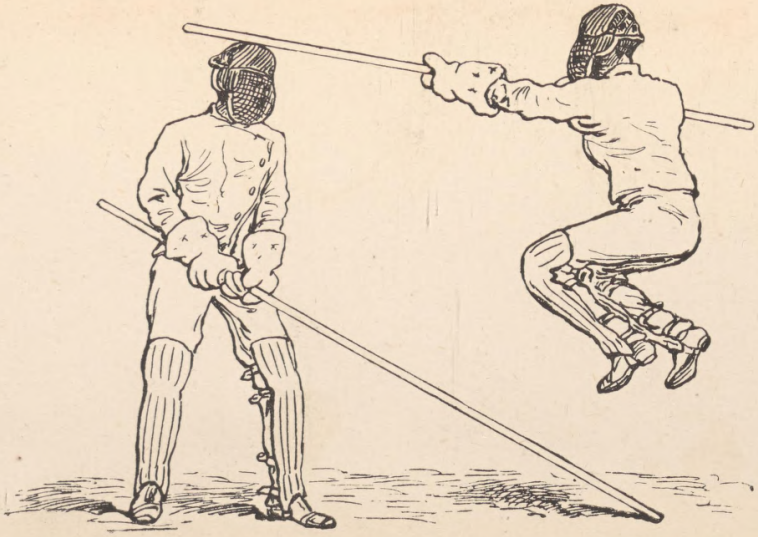
SIXTH GUARD. STRIKE SIX.

FIG. 7.

STRIKE AT HEAD. (THE PIN.) HEAD GUARD.

STRIKE AT HEAD. (THE PIN.) HEAD GUARD.

FIG 8.



A HIT AND A MISS.

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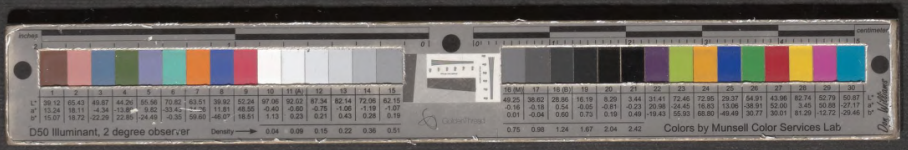
FIG. 9.

JUVENILE QUARTER-STAFF.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AND

QUARTER-STAFFS, GLOVES, & EQUIPMENT.

[*Vide* DRESS, page 9.]

THE PLATES

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